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PROFILE: GILLESPIE COUNTY AIRPORT, FREDERICKSBURG, TEXAS

By Cheryl Williams Austin, Texas

Katharine Hepburn and Howard Hughes would have had a rendezvous here. They would have sat in the Officer's Club by the flickering fireplace in comfy leather chairs listening to Sinatra, while Kate sipped a highball and Howard went on about his latest aviation venture. Whoa! This place will do that to you! It has a 1940's, World War II era ambiance that will take you back in time.

Gillespie County Airport in Fredericksburg is definitely not a utilitarian, unadorned, simply functional general aviation airport. I knew the airport had a hotel and a diner, but I was not prepared for what I saw when I drove up. This place is great! It is attractively landscaped and surprisingly looks new with all the buildings painted a clean white with logos of the special services accented in bright colors. The airport was immaculate, clean, and mowed, amazingly well-kept! This is a special place, indeed!

The airport is located three miles southwest of downtown Fredericksburg on State Highway 16. It is situated between the Gillespie County Fairgrounds and Lady Bird Johnson Municipal Park and Golf Course.

Airport Manager Roger Hansen has only been at the airport for one year, having taken the job following his retirement from the Air Force. Roger retired as a colonel after a 30-year career as a pilot. >> continued on page 3



FAA's Grant Program for Fiscal Year 2007

Congressional action on FAA's programs for Fiscal Year 2007, including the federal airport improvement program which provides most of TxDOT Aviation's grant funds, is moving forward. A House committee has approved full funding for the grant program at \$3.7B. However, the comparable committee in the Senate has set the program at \$3.52B, a slight reduction as compared to FY 2006. The next step is for reconciliation of differences between committees followed by a full vote of the House and the Senate. It is highly unlikely that the FAA funding bill will come up for a vote prior to the fall elections.

Federal Aviation Administration Reauthorization

The other important federal issue on the radar screen is reauthorization of FAA's programs. On September 30, 2007, current legislation for FAA programs will expire. The National Association of State Aviation Officials (NASAO), of which TxDOT is a member, supports a five-year reauthorization to include a grant program of \$3.8B for Fiscal Year 2008, increasing by \$100M



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each year through 2012. NASAO also supports continuation of state apportionment under the existing formula which is based on population and state size, highly favorable to Texas. NASAO further supports continuation of the non-primary entitlement grant program which has been put to good use at many Texas airports. The final issue to be debated is whether to retain the existing aviation tax structure, a ticket tax and a tax on general aviation fuel, or change to a user based fee system. The general aviation community is fairly well united in opposition to the change to a user based system of taxes as it is felt it would have a detrimental impact on general aviation growth and safety.

TxDOT Aviation's New Flight Services Director

TxDOT Aviation Division's Flight Services, which provides air transportation for state officials and maintenance for state operated aircraft, has a new Director, J.F. (Jay) Joseph. Prior to joining the Aviation Division, Jay retired from the United States Marine Corps as a Colonel after 29 years of service, including a tour with the Navy Blue Angels. Concurrently, Jay completed over 20 years of service as a pilot for US Airways. During his 39-year career in aviation, Jay has accumulated over 25,000 flight hours in military, air-carrier, and general aviation aircraft. He also has over 22 years' experience as an aviation safety consultant and accident investigator.

Welcome Jay to TxDOT Aviation. ♦



MEA CULPA

Regarding "The Three Wise Men of Lockhart – 50R" article on page 4 of the 2006 June-July Wingtips: the correct RV definition, instead of recreational vehicle, is for the increasingly popular homebuilt aircraft of which initials belong to Richard VanGrunsven, designer and founder of the RV or Van's Aircraft. We regret the error. ◆

PROFILE: GILLESPIE COUNTY AIRPORT continued from page 1

According to Roger, "This is a public-use general aviation facility owned and operated by Gillespie County. It has a $5,002' \times 75'$ asphalt runway, with a 35' full-length taxiway. The terminal building provides access to phone and restrooms, 24 hours per day. We have MIRL pilot controlled lighting, PAPI runway 14/32 instrument approaches, and an Automated Weather Observing Station. Avgas/Jet-A is provided by Fredericksburg FBO by truck or self-serve 24 hours per day, and we also have Jet-A by Fritz Aviation's truck."

Roger continues, "We have approximately 50 fixed-wing aircraft and two helicopters based on the airfield. There are no commercial traffic and no regularly scheduled airlines using the airport. We average 42-50 operations a day. In general, traffic has grown and FBOs are selling more fuel. I am pleased they are seeing more visitors from town who come out to watch aircraft operations and other functions."

Our tour of the airport facility grounds was done via Roger's truck. I was impressed by his knowledge of all the various aspects of the airport, especially since he has been there such a short time. Moreover, his enthusiasm is contagious, "This is a first rate airport, and I'm proud to manage it and work with the fine people that make it such a class act. I really enjoy what I'm doing here. It's like a hobby for me. And, everyone is excited about the uniqueness of what we have here with the hotel, diner and conference center."

AIRPORT HISTORY

Prior to 1945, Gillespie County Airport was originally an old Army Air Corps layout with three runways. It was established by Hans Hannemann and his friend, business associate and mentor Red Schroeder, who would drive back and forth to Schreiner Field in Kerrville to conduct flight training for naval aviation cadets in the famed Stearman biplane. Hans was a contract pilot in the Navy flying Stearmans during WWII. People say it is because of his tireless efforts to promote the need for an airport that it even exists. A commemorative plaque dedicating the new terminal building to Hans, and giving him much-deserved credit for the airport's beginnings, is displayed at the entrance of the building. This September Hans celebrated his 90th birthday!

The scenery of the Hill Country itself is an added attraction just to fly over it, especially the City of Fredericksburg. Everything seems to come together here. Roger added, "You can park your airplane and walk to your hotel room. Many pilots will taxi their airplanes around until they find the closest spot to the hotel. Generally, outside of conventions, there's always a place to park, to tie down, and we have weather that does not preclude aviation things from taking place."

The airport is a very safe place. "We have basically a VFR airport, a non-controlled airport, and that's what draws most of general aviation here—the fact that there is no tower. Pilots separate themselves and are very responsible in the way that they communicate with one another as they are out there flying. Changing three years ago from a 3,800-foot runway with a partial taxiway, to the 5,000-foot runway with a full-length taxiway makes it a little easier to get in and out because you don't have airplanes on the runway back taxiing. You can get off at any one of the four taxiways and come back up the taxiway without interfering with landing traffic," said Roger.

WHO USES THE AIRPORT?

According to Roger, a sampling of organizations that use the airport:

- The Civil Air Patrol recently established a squadron in this area and they sometimes fly out of here to their destinations.
- The Department of Navy trainers from Corpus Christi come here in their King Airs to teach Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard turboprop pilots.
- The former Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Michael W. Hagee, comes here periodically for events at the Nimitz Museum in his Gulfstream V aircraft.
- The Texas Forest Service was based here during the fire season with their standby helicopters and their aerial spotters.
- When Hurricanes Rita and Katrina came ashore, the town was filled with evacuees and people who were asking for hangar space. Bob Snowden, local FBO, flew a couple of trips picking up supplies in Austin and taking them to New Orleans and Houston.
- And many other organizations bring airplanes to the hangar to conduct technical sessions and safety seminars.

AIRPORT AMENITIES

Dick Estenson owns the Conference Center, Hangar Hotel and the 40's Airport Diner. This is the largest event center in the area with 10,000 feet of a fully air-conditioned conference area and 8,000 feet of exhibition space. It has modern restrooms, great lighting and ample parking. The main conference room features a restored theater marquee and two break rooms. Large hydraulic hangar doors allow inside-outside functions adjacent to the Airport Diner. There are plans for a facility expansion project that includes a new FBO service building, hangar, a large dedicated ramp area, and a large new parking lot. •



AIRPORT DINER

The airport restaurant design is of one of America's most recognized icons – the diner. With 1940's retro chrome bar stools, old style booths, chrome back wall, and black and white checkered counter front, it was a delight just to step inside! Opened in 2003, the diner features a genuine soda fountain that offers drink and dessert treats.

HANGAR HOTEL

This is not a no frills hotel that just provides a clean, safe place to spend the night. It is a luxury hotel that was named one of the top ten hotels in Texas by Texas Monthly. There are 50 rooms done in the WWII, 1940's décor with beautiful furnishings, king-size beds and an expansive deck to watch aircraft or catch a beautiful sunset. The Officer's Club lounge is spectacular and includes a pool table, fireplace, piano for live musical entertainment and a full bar. Outside, a searchlight, water tower and palm trees add to

the hotel's Pearl Harbor ambiance. Although it appears to be a converted hangar, the hotel was actually built new from the ground up. No smoking or pets are allowed at the hotel according to assistant manager Steven Claypole.

FIXED-BASE OPERATIONS

- Fredericksburg FBO provides transient and longterm hangar rental. They have a pilot's lounge, flight-planning room with WSI Pilot Brief Pro Services, private meeting rooms, a dedicated fax machine and high speed Internet. They provide full-service and self-service Avgas 100LL and Jet A at the main terminal location, and self-serve 100LL only at the north ramp location.
- Fritz Aviation provides general aircraft maintenance and inspection, and will deliver Jet A fuel to your aircraft anywhere on the airport. Additionally, they provide oxygen service, aircraft modifications, hangar rental, aircraft parking (ramp or tiedown) and will clean, wash and detail aircraft.
- Hotel Observation Deck at Gillespie County Airport
- Pippen-York Flying Machine Company provides avionics maintenance, installation and restorations.
- Snowden Aviation buys and sells light aircraft, rents hangar space and plans to build another 10-unit "T" hangar facility. Bob Snowden is a flight instructor specializing in tailwheel instruction. He is also a contract pilot who flies both fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters.
- Triple K Aero's 30-year lease from the county of ten hangars is up, so the county now rents them. But Triple K still owns a set of 10 nested "T" hangar units that are available for rent.

THE FUTURE

When asked about an airport master plan, Roger remarked, "Our Master Plan is demand-based. That is, the number of operations will drive when we expand and how we expand. There's a plan to expand the runway to the southeast to 6,400 feet. It will be a \$40 million dollar project (\$4 million for the county portion) since it would require passing over SH 16." But Roger is not sure that they will need to lengthen the runway since he says, "Jets are becoming more efficient, which may preclude the need for a longer runway to accommodate them." They also plan to widen the runway to 100 feet and upgrade airfield facilities to meet business jet requirements. And, since future landside development will be needed for growth, they are considering acquiring 26 acres for additional hangars.

For now, Roger is "following his bliss"; he says simply that, "I like airplanes." Roger is right when he states that, "With the Hangar Hotel and the whole South Pacific, WWII, 40's ambiance built around here; along with the water tower having the word FREEDOM painted on it (after 9/11), it just calls out to the aviation community and says, 'Hey! Come look!'" Remember, you don't have to fly to this airport to enjoy it! You can drive here and stay at the hotel, eat at the diner and be only three miles from downtown Fredericksburg and all it has to offer. You can contact Roger Hansen by email, rogerh@ctesc.net or call him at 830/990-5764 for more questions. (See a related-story on Airport Dog, Spinner Snowden.)

AIRPORT DOG - SPINNER SNOWDEN

Cheryl Williams Austin, Texas

(This is the first of what I hope to be a series that covers an overlooked important contribution to general aviation-AIRPORT DOGS!!! Almost every airport at one time or another has had at least one airport dog, and it's time they got the credit they deserve!)

Although his adopted parents, Bob and Karen Snowden, now operate Snowden Aviation at Gillespie County Airport, Spinner Snowden began his airport career with them 13 years ago at Grand Prairie Airport under the tutelage of then airport manager Loretta Scott. According to Bob, "Spinner wandered into a hangar looking for employment Labor Day weekend 1993." Apparently, it was kind of a "will work for food" thing. Karen added, "The poor little guy



was very underweight—was literally starving—and was only about half of his current weight. I was looking for a dog, so I was happy to have him." Since he was no bigger than the white prop spinner on their Cessna 170, Spinner was a perfect name. She said it took a while, but he started gaining weight and after going to the vet and getting all "fixed" up, he settled into his loving home and new job.

Spinner loves to fly in his parent's Cessna 180. He has flown to Las Vegas, Salt Lake City and over the Grand Canyon. Dang! I haven't even flown over the Grand Canyon! Studies show dogs share four of the five main personality traits that psychologists use to understand human behavior: energy, affection, emotional reactivity and intelligence. That part about emotional reactivity explains a lot about what Karen told me, "Spinner isn't shy about letting a pilot know when they are not doing a particularly good job of flying. If the flight gets a little rough or the landing ends up being less than perfect, he will make his way up front, cock his head and just stare at the pilot!"

Bob said, "There have been other dogs at the airport over the years, but Spinner is the only one right now." While Gillespie County Airport does not discriminate in their hiring of airport dogs, Bob Hansen, airport manager, observed and Roger agreed, "Short dogs seem to do better around turning propellers." Humm?

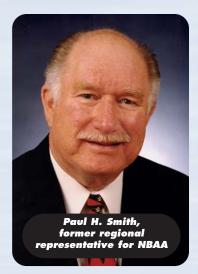
At 15, Spinner is semi-retired. His duties used to include keeping birds out of the hangar, but he is slowing down. While he used to work much harder, Roger advised me, "Spinner's main job now is to keep runways, taxiways and ramps clear of itinerant dogs and other animals, and to alert management of any unwelcome 'gifts' they leave behind." Whew! Nasty job, but somebody's gotta do it! Between inspections Spinner takes breaks to watch TV from the couch in the hangar. At home he monitors activities from his comfy, padded window perch. I forgot to ask where this hard working little Chihuahua sleeps, but I think I know the answer to that! ◆

PAUL SMITH RETIRES FROM NBAA

By Jay Carpenter Texas Aviation Association

On May 2006, Paul H. Smith retired as Regional Representative of the National Business Aviation Association (NBAA) after 18 years of service. Paul was replaced by Steve Hadley of Waco. Paul and his wife, Myrna, live in Georgetown, Texas.

I first met Paul at a board meeting of the Texas Aviation Association in 2001. One is immediately taken by his charming personality. Also, I was impressed with his 27-year military background. In the military he was involved in air-traffic and flying occupations. Paul was a designated pilot for then U.S. Army Secretary John Marsh and chief of fixed-wing standardization and training at the military district of Washington, D.C. He received several awards, including the Legion of Merit, the Distinguished Flying Cross with Oak Leaf Cluster, the Bronze Star and the Air Medal.



Paul Smith's military experience includes a position as Chief of Fixed-Wing Standardization and Training in the military district of Washington, D.C. Prior to this position, Smith was Chief of Fixed-Wing Standardization and Training for the U.S. Army in Alaska and a reconnaissance airplane pilot in Vietnam. He graduated from the U.S. Air Force Air Traffic Control School in Biloxi, Mississippi. Paul also was a consultant of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) for midair collision investigations. ->

Paul served as NBAA staff for 11 years on air traffic and airspace issues. Later, Paul achieved the position of Director of Air Traffic Services & Infrastructure. He served the last seven years as NBAA Regional Representative for the Southwest and Mountain areas. These areas include Louisiana, Texas, Colorado and Montana. Additionally, Paul spent many years on the road representing business aviation.

"Paul's outstanding service to NBAA has ensured that the association and the business aviation community are well represented," said NBAA President and CEO Ed Bolen. "We wish him well in his endeavors."

Paul graduated from the prestigious Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Prescott, Arizona, and served as Director for the Air Traffic Department of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA). He received awards from NBAA, the Texas Aviation Association (TXAA), and RTCA, Inc., a private, not-for-profit corporation that develops consensus-based recommendations regarding communications, navigation, surveillance and air traffic management system issues.

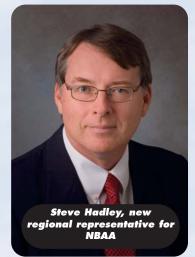
On April 1992, NBAA and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) announced the appointment of Paul H. Smith, Manager, Air Traffic Services, to the position of chairman of the FAA's Air Traffic Procedures Advisory Committee (ATPAC). The committee, which consists of 16 member organizations, elected Smith during their April meeting held in Washington, D.C.

Paul served as an advisor to the Texas Aviation Association's board of directors since 2000. "In my travels and dealings with Paul I have always been able to mine gold nuggets of wisdom. As a board member we can all benefit from that source of knowledge," said Tre Deathe, Executive Director at TXAA.

Paul is a pilot who holds twin-engine and instrument ratings. He is also a certified flight instructor. We all wish Paul the very best in any new endeavor.

The new NBAA Regional Representative is Steve Hadley. Hadley has been the Chief Pilot for companies such as Methodist Hospital in Lubbock, Texas; Furrs Supermarkets, Lubbock; Campbell Cherry and Dove law firm in Waco, Texas; as well as Chief Pilot and Director of Flight Operations for both Abilene Aero and Lubbock Aero. He also served as Chairman of the General Aviation Committee for Lubbock International Airport.

The National Business Aviation Association serves over 7,000 member companies. They promote aviation interests of businesses that use aircraft in the U.S. and elsewhere in the world. NBAA provides products and services to the business aviation community, including the NBAA Annual Meeting & Convention, the world's largest civil aviation trade show. For more information visit www.nbaa.org. ◆



A MAJOR TRANSFORMATION AT STINSON MUNICIPAL AIRPORT!!!

Tim O'Krongley Stinson Municipal Airport

On May 31, another exciting chapter was written in the rich history of Stinson Municipal Airport. State Representative Carlos Uresti and City Councilman Roland Guiterrez joined several other dignitaries in a very important groundbreaking ceremony. The event officially launched a \$4.8 million dollar expansion project which will touch just about every part of the Stinson operations. In addition to groundbreaking itself, guests were treated to a flyover performed by the "Alamo Liaison Squadron."

The expansion program launched will have a dramatic impact on the facilities at Stinson Municipal Airport. Once completed, the project will bring an additional 24,000 square feet worth of space to the Stinson operation. The added space will be used in a variety of different ways, however, one of the most exciting changes is the partnership which has developed between

Stinson and Palo Alto College. Palo Alto will move their entire aviation department to Stinson, taking advantage of the new classroom space which will be available once construction is completed. New businesses will find new space in which to set up operations and existing businesses will have new options should they choose to expand. Additional terminal space and concession space will also be available as a result of the expansion project.

Stinson Municipal Airport is the second oldest general aviation airport in the United States. It started as a flight school back in 1915. That's when Katherine, Marjorie and Eddie Stinson struck a deal with city leaders in San Antonio. They agreed to rent 500 acres of land from the city in exchange for \$5.00 per year. With that simple beginning, Stinson launched itself into aviation history. The airport has served as a flight school, San Antonio's primary commercial airport, a training ground for WWII fighter pilots and finally, a general aviation reliever airport for San Antonio International Airport. It has served the City of San Antonio extremely well for a total of 91 years and now, with this major expansion program underway, Stinson's place in San Antonio aviation is guaranteed for decades to come. •

FLICHT SAFETY

THE GOLDEN RULES OF SHARING THE SKY

- Always allow a minimum of three minutes in trail of significantly larger airplanes. Five minutes is even better.
- Cross the flight path of large aircraft at least 1,000 feet below, and note the direction of the wind.
- Fly the upwind side of any large aircraft's flight path.
- Remember what your instructor always told you about landing after and rotating before heavy aircraft.
- Enter traffic areas at pattern altitude. Climbing and descending airplanes simply can't see each other as well.
- Helicopter rotors create some remarkably ugly vortices.
 Warning: Don't fly under helicopters ever!
- When acceptable, ask Air Traffic Control (ATC) for a short approach in lieu of landing behind heavy traffic.
- Every time possible, use the luxury of approach and departure services
- After a controller points out traffic, don't be shy about asking ATC for updates on the traffic's location until you're sure it's not a factor.
- When arriving or departing, remember you can always ask for more time to allow any hazards to dissipate. One mistake might be all you get.

SOURCE: Plane & Pilot 2005



The Aviation Division continues to serve the public throughout the state by providing lending services to patrons by mail.

POLICY: Any resident of Texas can check out three video tapes at a time for two weeks at no charge. Only return postage is necessary.

MEMBERSHIP: To enroll in our database, write to TxDOT

Aviation Division, 125 E. 11th Street, Austin, Texas 78701; give your name, address, telephone number, as well as your driver's license number. After membership enrollment, a video catalog of tapes will be sent to you for your review. You can then place your order at your convenience by calling our 800 number.

AUSTIN PATRONS: Office Hours – Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

For more information, please contact Donald Brown at 1-800/68-PILOT.

INTERESTING DVDs/VIDEOS:

D1009 - Surviving Systems Emergencies (King)

D1010 - Surviving Your Most Feared Emergencies (King)

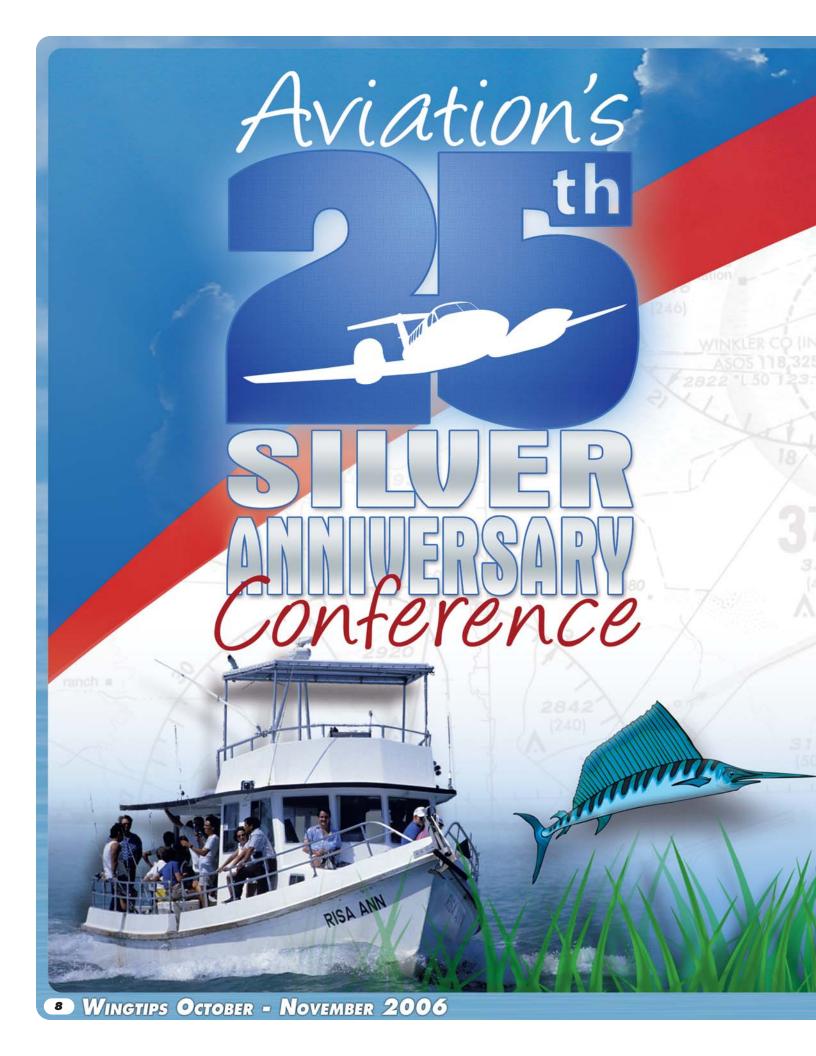
D1079 - Night Flying (King)

D1207 - Maneuvering Flight

D1208 - Weather Decision Making •

GRANTS REGEIVED

Scurry County Airport/Winston Field	\$589,415	Construct hangar; pavement & security improvements, hangar access taxiway apron.
Sugar Land Regional Airport	\$11,038,370	Construct G.A complex apron, G.A. access road, water; install sanitary sewer utilities & electrical improvements.
Kate Craddock Field/ Burnet	\$800,227.75	Construct asphalt access taxiways & aprons; construct 10-unit Thangar building; construct concrete trench drain in existing asphalt pavement.
Graham Municipal Airport	\$3,135,000	Pavement and lighting improvements.
Littlefield Municipal Airport	\$400,000	Rehabilitate, mark and stripe runway 1-19.
Reagan County Airport/Big Lake	\$404,000	Construct new apron; stub taxiway; install PAPI runway 16-34.
Aransas County Airport/Rockport	\$3,300,000	Rehabilitate runway 14-32; mark & stripe runway 14-32; construct drainage improvements; replace medium intensity runway lights; install signage improvements; install erosion/sedimentation controls.
Live Oak County/ George West	\$788,618	Rehabilitate runway 13-31; overlay & mark stub taxiway; rehabilitate & mark hangar access taxiway; mark runway 13-31 & overlay apron.
Hearne Municipal Airport	\$530,020	Rehabilitate runway & marking; rehabilitate taxiway & marking; drainage improvements.
Hall-Miller Airport/Atlanta	\$358,420	Replace medium intensity runway lights; install PAPI-2 runway 5; install PAPI-2 runway 23; replace rotating beacon; install new lighted windcone & segmented circle; install new electrical vault.
Jim Hogg County Airport/Hebbronville	\$1,190,000	Mark and overlay runway 13-31; overlay & mark taxiways; overlay apron.
Wheeler Municipal Airport	\$396,960	Rehabilitate & mark runway 17-35, apron & taxiway.
Schreiner Field/ Kerrville	\$1,019,025	Construct terminal building & associated appurtenances.
Schreiner Field/ Kerrville Kimble County Airport/Junction	\$1,019,025 \$894,520	Construct terminal building & associated appurtenances. Construct parallel taxiway; rehabilitate apron & install tie downs & hold sign.



It's time to mark your calendar!

We are working to make this year's conference better than ever.

Registration for participants and exhibitors begins Friday, November 3, 2006.

You can register at the following Web site: http://tti.tamv.edv/conferences/tac07/ We also invite you to participate as a co-host and/or exhibitor.

Upcoming topics for this year's conference are:

- Very Light Jets
- Neighborhood Watch Programs at General Aviation Airports
- → NASAO Update on Federal Issues/Reauthorization
- Other planning, programming, project management and grant-related topics

Plan to be in Corpus Christi on April 18, 19, 20, 2007 for the 25th Annual Texas Aviation Conference at the

Omni Bayfront Hotel,

900 North Shoreline Boulevard.

Special Activities

On Wednesday, April 18 from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., our 10th Annual Golf Tournament is scheduled at the **North Shore Country Club in Portland, Texas, located on the Corpus Christi Bay.** All golfers must be registered to attend the conference.

Also on Wednesday, there will be a **Fishing Tournament.** The "catch and release" tournament will be based on the honor system. Each contestant will be provided a map to public access fishing areas.

A get acquainted reception is planned for Wednesday evening from 5:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. The reception will start in the Exhibit Area with hors d'oeuvres and continue on Captain Clark's Flagship Cruise Boat sponsored by Garver Engineers. The one-hour cruise will start at 7:00 p.m.

Thursday there will be a keynote Luncheon Speaker. On Thursday evening, there will be an Awards Banquet at the Ortiz Center located at 400 Harbor Drive in Corpus Christi. There will be transportation provided from the Hotel to the Banquet. A Social, sponsored by Rodriguez Engineering, will take place immediately following the Awards Banquet.

Please contact Becky Vick at the TxDOT Aviation Office at 800-68-PILOT or bvick@dot.state.tx.us for additional information.

MOONEY CEO GRETCHEN JAHN: A WELCOME NOVELTY IN AVIATION

By Karen Di Piazza Dallas Ft. Worth Aviation & Business Journal

"I am sort of a novelty – both as a female CEO who is actively flying and racing planes, and as a female CEO of an aircraft original equipment manufacturer," she said. Mooney Airplane Company CEO Gretchen Jahn is the first female to be elected as a CEO of an aircraft manufacturer. She's also the first female to do so coming from outside of the aviation industry.

Breaking the metaphoric glass ceiling, particularly in aviation, where it has been a male-dominated industry, is a triumph for Jahn – and for her mother, too, as her dream for Jahn was to become a "great corporate wife." Overseeing Mooney, though, is far from her first CEO post is which she's turned out to be a great corporate leader.

Jahn is a people person, so she discovered the world of human behavior and psychology. She attended Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin, becoming a cum laude graduate and getting a bachelor's degree in psychology. She later attended the University of Colorado in Boulder, Colorado, and obtained her master's in experimental psychology.

"Experimental psychology is about human memory learning and language – how people learn," says Jahn. "Understanding how people learn has helped me in my career."

She also obtained her certificate in integrated resource management from the American production and Inventory Control Society.

"This has been an interesting life journey," she said. "In my opinion, there are two different ways to make your path in the world. There are those people who really know what it is that they want, and they spend their life pursuing that; the road may not be completely straight, but they have a clear vision of who they want to be, what they want to do, where they want to go and they do what they can to get there."

"Then, there are folks like me; there isn't an end goal that looks like that. Instead, it's been a personal discovery of my own interests and capabilities – pursuing the interests and honing the capabilities as an offer to those around me – to friends, employers and to groups that I belong to."

Jahn said she's evaluated what she's good at, and has come to a conclusion: she's good at what she likes.

"I've packaged that into a particular career pursuit, which comes into play with the love of manufacturing, the love of aviation, systems, business, and people as a whole," she says. Jahn says she's good at "organizing people, working with people and motivating people." She believes those qualities make her a good CEO. She's always thinking about problems and asking questions, which she explained provokes a different kind of thinking process to solve problems faster.

"Guiding someone is to help them achieve their direction, but as a CEO leading is setting the direction, so, you're working with folks to go in the direction in which you're leading,'" she explained. "To lead, you have to show the example; you have to be willing to provide energy." →



Jahn says she encourages people to come to her with questions, especially if they're having difficulty getting results on something.

Jahn has taken the aviation industry by surprise. That's an understatement, though, of where's she's taken Mooney. Before she arrived at Mooney in November 2004, replacing J. Nelson Happy, no one was very happy; employee count was down to 145 and aircraft deliveries for that year had sunk to 36. There was also talk of filing bankruptcy again – closing the doors for good.

Under Jahn's leadership, aircraft deliveries in 2005 more than doubled, to 85, so it was no surprise when Jahn also became president and CEO of Mooney's parent company, Mooney Aerospace Group, Ltd., a publicly traded company, on July 21, 2005.

In Mooney's past, management was unable to overcome the challenges of the day, however, Jahn has no problem in that area. She applied clean-up principles to aircraft manufacturing: to sort, organize, clean up, have a positive state of mind and have discipline. In doing so, Mooney reduced costs because it didn't take as long to get something done, and waste overall was reduced. "Although the company has seen tremendous growth and we've come a long way, we still have a ways to go," she noted. And she has big plans to take the company to new horizons.

Jahn has held varied executive positions in business and with her experience in processes and productivity, spanning from manufacturing and service firms to metal fabrication, meat packing and pacemakers, she's proven she knows how to lead and get results.

"In terms of being a private pilot, I've never looked back, but I never incorporated it into my worklife until recently," she says. "So that's a real novelty in this industry. The only other female CEO of a manufacturer today is June Maule of Maule Air, Inc., but that's because her husband, Belford D. Maule, died. The same thing held true for Moya Lear and Olive Ann Beech, who both took over as CEO after their husbands, respectively, Bill Lear and Walter H. Beech, died. So, I'm the only one that's come in from the outside! And I don't know of any other CEO who races airplanes."

Virtually all women of achievement in aviation have been or are members of The Ninety-Nines – a nonprofit international organization of licensed women pilots. Jahn joined this elite group, unwittingly, through her husband's encouragement to learn how to fly in 1985. "My husband, Karl Sutterfield, tried to teach me how to fly," she smiled. "I learned how to navigate and read the charts, and I could tune the radios. I could do everything except actually take off and land! Karl was flying before me, and he kept encouraging me to get my license, and my response had always been, 'Yeah, yeah, yeah.' But then he was gone on a three-week trip. By the time he came back, I had chosen an instructor; several lessons later I was hooked!"

After she obtained her license, her first experience with the 99s wasn't racing. She was put in charge of timing races at the finish line, at the tower in Santa Fe, N.M. "I had a ball; I watched these airplanes zooming down the runway, down the finish line, and I said, 'I need to do that!' I was really hooked then," she said.

A handicap speed race is a way of having slow and fast airplanes compete against each other in the same race, she explained.

"Each airplane is assigned a handicap based on the make and model of the airplane, and then your times are compared to your handicap," she said. "Whoever does the best against the handicap wins. Now I compete in the 99s Air Race Classic, which is an all-women's four-day (transcontinental) race."

She describes the Air Race Classic as "the spiritual successor to the Powder Puff Derby." Also called the Women's Air Derby, the event took root on Sunday, Aug. 19, 1929, when 20 brave female pilots planned and executed the world's first women's cross-country airplane race. The racers took off from Santa Monica, California. Seven days later, the raced ended in Cleveland, Ohio.

This year, for the Air Race Classic, Jahn and the other female pilots started in Mesa, Arizona, on June 20. After several race stops in many parts of Texas and the Midwest, the race concluded June 23 in Menominee, Michigan. Jahn and her racing partner, Carol Foy, took first place in this year's race.

"I am really hooked on aviation, and equally hooked on Mooney." Jahn said. She said she'd continue to race airplanes; that's become a real passion for her. And whenever she gets the chance, she and her husband will fly off to some desolate place – enjoying nature, to keep a balance in her mind and soul.

(Permission to print from Dallas/Ft. Worth Aviation & Business Journal, September 2006; condensed version.)

EDITOR NOTE: Gretchen Jahn resigned from Mooney on October 1, 2006, but she is remaining with the company as an advisor to oversee the (235-plus knot turbo) Acclaim certification.

DALLAS EXECUTIVE AIRPORT SOARS WITH NEW FACILITIES

By S. Clayton Moore Dallas/Ft. Worth Aviation & Business Journal

What was once the friendly but antiquated Red Bird Airport, in Dallas, is finding new life as Dallas Executive Airport (RBD). An extensive series of improvements have recently been completed and the investment of a massive amount of money – nearly \$8 million – and resources into the airport facility over the last five years have created a wholly new entity.

In just the past few months, the airport has opened a brand new terminal building built to the highest standards, a state-of-the-art conference center and a \$1.3 million control tower.

The new amenities grew out of a master plan, begun in 2001, that called for a multitude of improvements to the existing airport. In addition to the major developments, the airport also spent \$1.3 million on infrastructure improvements that included updating its lighted runway and taxiway signs, taxiway extensions and major airfield electrical system, and enlarging its transient aircraft parking. The new passenger terminal is part of a complex that includes two \$4.15 million office buildings totaling nearly 12,000 square feet.

"All of those projects have now been completed, along with a new public apron that allows drivers to drop passengers off much closer to the terminal building," said Jose Torres, a public information officer and spokesman for the City of Dallas. The city held grand-opening ceremonies for the new and improved airport on April 27, 2006, celebrating with an official ribbon cutting, aerobatic air show demonstration and tours of the airport.

Moving the control tower was perhaps the most significant and time-consuming project, but relocating it allowed for the installation of water and sewer lines and a new paved access road.

"Now the tower is away from the terminal, where before it was right next to it," Torres said. "Moving it away allows for significantly more growth and development of the land near the terminal."

The airport offers two runways, an FAA traffic control tower, ILS and VFR instrument approaches and visual approach aids (VASI). The upgrades represent the first comprehensive improvements to the airport since the city first took possession of the field from the U.S. Department of Defense in 1946.

While the changing of the airport's name was contentious in the general aviation community, the city believed that the airport required a new name for a new era in its development.

"The name was changed in February 2002," Torres recalled. "Although the navigational sign remains RBD for flying purposes, we feel that the new official name more closely reflects the purposes of this modern airport. It's become a truly contemporary airport for business and corporate travel as well as general aviation."

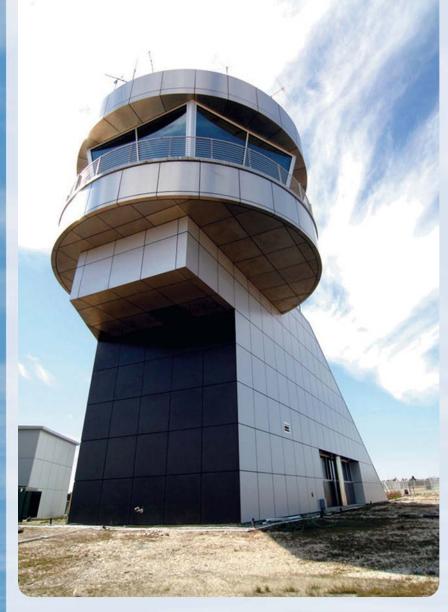
In fact, the airport is one of the closest general aviation facilities to Dallas, a fact reflected by the city's claim that Dallas Executive Airport is just 10 minutes and one stoplight from downtown Dallas. Obviously, business people are seeing the potential here: private investors have spent more than \$9 million on development here in recent years.

These improvements put the airport in a prime position to attract businesses to the airport, and the opportunities are significant. More than 250 acres directly adjacent to the airport are available for lease and development, and the city hopes that business owners and providers of aviation-related services will recognize the possibilities inherent in this growing business area.

"In the grand scheme of things, these business opportunities are designed to stimulate growth in the southern sector of the city," Torres explained. "Bringing development will certainly bring more economic opportunities for the people of Dallas and contribute to a better quality of life."



To facilitate development of the property closest to the airport's terminal building, the airport constructed its new \$1.3 million cont tower a little further away from the main facilities.



Torres also sees a real synergy between the airport's heavy traffic – more than 100,000 takeoffs and landings each year – and the economic impact of the surrounding business developments.

"Businesses that support general and corporate aviation will bring job openings and also stimulate more businesses to grow," he predicted. "When other companies see that there's a lot of activity here in terms of businesses, restaurants, hotels and other facilities, they will start to realize the attractiveness of Dallas Executive Airport and its nearby business community. That's the prime idea in developing this area."

The facility has a new manager taking care of its needs as well. Lana Furra took over as manager of the growing airport in 2005, after a decade of supervising the cityowned, public-use Dallas Heliport/Vertiport on top of the Dallas Convention Center.

The facilities already on the field at Dallas Executive aren't insignificant. There are already more than 300 hangars in place. Two FBOs, Cutter Aviation, and Jet Center of Dallas, offer fuel sales, aircraft storage, charter services and other necessities to the burgeoning aviation community.

In addition, the airport is home to three maintenance facilities, a helicopter flight school and the Dallas police helicopter unit. The airport also hosts an aerial advertisement company as well as IndUS Aviation, a unique aviation company that is resurrecting the T-211 aircraft and re-branding it as the "Thorpedo," after its creator, John Thorp.

Businesses seeking to open or even relocate to the airport may find some help from the city.

"The target, of course, is aviation-related businesses," Torres "The city's Office of Economic Development will consider each individual project to see what other needs they have. Some may need infrastructure to build upon. There may be different incentives available depending on the company. There's a lot of opportunity here."

To broadcast the opportunities available at the airport, as well as to communicate with the people of Dallas, Dallas Executive Airport is planning many new events designed to attract visitors to the airport.

"We have a lot of plans and there are more in the works," Torres said. "We want to involve the community so that they understand the purposes of the airport and how this facility benefits them."

The airport will be holding an open house for the new conference center so that individuals and groups may become familiar with the new facilities. The city is also planning to hold an air show at Dallas Executive Airport in the spring of next year.

"We want the people here to see that the airport is very friendly to the community," Torres said. "We need their support for future plans and development. We believe that if they understand they're a critical part of this airport community, they'll be more likely to support our future projects."

To tap into the general and corporate aviation sectors, the airport is also planning to hold a fly-in sometime in October.

"The pilots who have never been here will have a chance to come, in look around the facility, and have some fun with their fellow pilots," Torres said. "Hopefully, the next time they want to come to a Dallas Cowboys game or the state fair or other events, they'll choose Dallas Executive Airport as their initial destination. From 150 miles out, you can fly here within an hour, park and get a shuttle downtown. At the end of the day, they can come back, get in their airplane, and go home. It's that easy." ->

The Texas Department of Transportation Aviation Division recognized Dallas Executive Airport as the "2004 Reliever Airport of the Year." Its supporters are certainly breathing a sigh of relief now that its improvements are open.

"Dallas Executive Airport is open for business and everyone is cleared to land," said Torres.

(Permission to print from Dallas/Ft. Worth Aviation & Business Journal, July 2006)

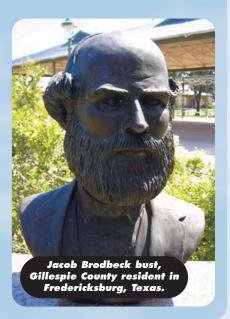
GILLESPIE COUNTY RESIDENT: FATHER OF U.S. AVIATION

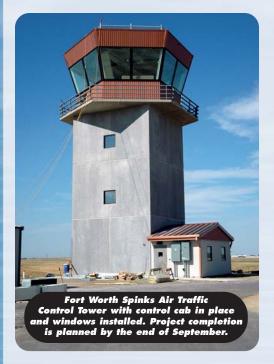
Cheryl Williams Austin, Texas

There is evidence—newspaper documentation and family oral history—to support the story that Gillespie County resident Jacob Brodbeck successfully piloted a fixed-wing aircraft in 1865; nearly 40 years prior to Orville and Wilbur Wright's history-making flight at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, in 1903.

The story is that Brodbeck flew his "airship" on Sept. 20, 1865, in an area about three miles east of Luckenbach. While the flight was successful, it ended in a crash landing destroying the aircraft. His airplane had wings, a propeller, a rudder and was powered by coiled springs. Apparently, Brodbeck gave up the idea for his flying machine when he was unable to get a patent for the device.

Many Hill Country residents refer to Brodbeck as the "Father of U.S. Aviation," and although a monument honoring his achievements sits on Marktplatz in downtown Fredericksburg, many believe he has not received the proper recognition for his historic aviation feat. He died in 1910, seven years after the Wright brothers' flights.









WEB SITES TO VISIT

Aviation/Military Museums

American Airpower Heritage Museum and Commemorative Air Force (CAF)

www.airpowermuseum.org

Frontiers of Flight Museum

www.flightmuseum.com

Lone Star Flight Museum **www.lsfm.org**

Nation Vietnam War Museum

www.nationalvnwarmuseum.org

USS Lexington Museum on the Bay www.usslexington.com

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Nov 11 Veterans Day Fly-In, Waco, Texas

Nov 12 Lone Star Flight Museum Fly-In,

Galveston, Texas

Dec 5 EAA Chapter 59 Pancake Fly-In,

McGregor Airport, McGregor, Texas

Dec 30Bell Co. CAP Sqd Breakfast,

Draughon-Miller Airport, Temple, Texas

Editor's Note: For most recent entries, check our Texas Aviation Calendar of Events at our Web site, www.txdot.gov.

Deadline for article submissions for the Jan-Feb 2007 Wingtips is Dec 8, 2006.





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